

**Title of Project:** IPM Labeling and TracApple© (Integrated Pest Management)

**Project Leaders:** Juliet Carroll and Curt Petzoldt, NYS IPM Program, Cornell University

**Funding Source:** USDA Rural Business Cooperative, NY Agricultural Innovation Center

**1. Overall Goal:** The overall goal is to assist farmers in capturing consumer demand for environmentally healthy and sustainable foods, and for increasing the market availability of those foods.

## **2. Specific Objectives:**

**IPM-GROWN FOODS** – Increase the understanding and use of IPM labeling by growers and marketers.

**TRAC© SOFTWARE** – Enable growers to more profitably capture value-added markets by updating the IPM record-keeping and reporting software, TracApple©.

## **3. Stated Deliverables:**

1. Increase the number of growers participating in IPM labeled products from the current 100 to 150.
2. Increase the number of retail outlets selling IPM labeled products from 1 supermarket chain with 60 stores to 2 supermarket chains with 100 stores.
3. Using TracApple© Excel spreadsheet software as a model, streamline recordkeeping and audit processes to enable growers to more profitably participate in IPM labeling and other value-added market certification programs. A minimum of fifty apple growers will maintain crop production records and generate reports using TracApple. Update Trac software for at least 4 other crops and introduce to 100 growers of each crop.

## **4. Progress report:**

### ***1. Brief overview of progress***

#### **IPM-GROWN FOODS**

With our help, Birdseye surveyed all of their vegetable grower suppliers to assess the level of current IPM/ICM practice. Results indicate a high level of IPM practice by some growers. Others will need assistance from CCE to attain a high level of IPM practice. Project participant – Rhett Smith, Birds Eye Foods, 90 Linden Oaks, Rochester, NY 14625, 585-383-1850 ext 254, [rsmith@birdseyefoods.com](mailto:rsmith@birdseyefoods.com).

SYSCO has indicated to Birdseye that an audit process will be conducted in 2005. An audit worksheet has been supplied to Birdseye in order for them to prepare. The audit will be conducted by AIB, a national food safety audit firm, and will consist of a visit to Birdseye facilities, interviews with Birdseye employees, review of documentation and random selection of a few growers whose records will be reviewed and who will be interviewed. We have reviewed the audit documentation with Birdseye staff and anticipate they will score well although there are some items that will need improvement in the future. We will likely assist Birdseye in the audit process.

The online version of the Cornell Integrated Crop and Pest Management Guidelines for Vegetables (<http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/recommends/>) will be very valuable in the audit process since it has links to information the AIB auditor will be reviewing.

Birds Eye Foods underwent the audit required by SYSCO. The audit was conducted by AIB, a national food safety audit firm, and consisted of a visit to Birds Eye Foods facilities, interviews with Birds Eye Foods employees, review of documentation and random selection of a few growers whose records were reviewed and who were interviewed. Birds Eye Foods expects to hear the results of the audit soon.

#### **TRAC<sup>®</sup> SOFTWARE**

Four new and two updated versions of Trac Software were developed and released for 15 crops on 4 CDs, as follows:

TracApple<sup>®</sup> 2005 CD – includes TracApple<sup>®</sup> and TracPear<sup>®</sup>

TracGrape<sup>®</sup> 2005 CD

TracBerry<sup>®</sup> 2005 CD – for strawberry, raspberry, blackberry, blueberry, currant and gooseberry

TracStoneFruit<sup>®</sup> 2005 CD – includes TracCherry<sup>®</sup> for sweet and tart cherry and TracStoneFruit<sup>®</sup> for peach, nectarine, plum and apricot

To date 80 TracApple CDs, 198 TracGrape CDs, 13 TracStoneFruit CDs and 10 TracBerry CDs have been distributed. A list of names/farms and the location of Trac software project participants (clientele) is included in the attached appendix. We added two additional questions and answers to the FAQ website and developed a 20-page software manual for Trac users that was included as a pdf on the software CDs. A new Trac Software brochure and order form was developed. The AIC logo is featured on this brochure.

The Trac Software website was completely revised to reflect the availability of the four CDs covering all major fruit crops grown in New York State. It is accessible from [www.nysipm.cornell.edu/trac/](http://www.nysipm.cornell.edu/trac/) and includes pages about the software, FAQs, order form, software license agreements, Trac Tips and Excel Tips.

## ***2. How stakeholders have been engaged (or plans to do so)***

#### **IPM-GROWN FOODS**

We will collaborate with Birds Eye Foods and Cornell Cooperative Extension to engage vegetable growers, probably starting initially with beets, carrots, and Romano beans. Birds Eye Foods' vision is to have all 250 Birds Eye growers engaged in their Sustainable Agriculture program within 7 years. To date approximately 30 vegetable growers of these crops are engaged in documenting their produce as IPM-grown.

#### **TRAC<sup>®</sup> SOFTWARE**

Growers provide continual feedback on Trac software problems and ideas through tech support calls and emails. Those growers who have been actively engaged in the development of Trac Software are identified in the appendix by an asterisk. Trac Software brochures were distributed at the Fruit and Vegetable Expo in Syracuse and at the AIC displays at various meetings. Trac information is shared via CCE newsletters and crop updates. Email announcements were sent to all prior users of Trac software about the availability of the new 2005 Trac versions.

Presentations about Trac Software were given at the Great Lakes Expo, Grand Rapids, MI and at the Cumberland-Shenandoah Fruit Workers Conference. Trac brochures with an order form were distributed at each meeting. An estimated 150 brochures were picked up by apple growers at the Great Lakes Expo.

**3. *Describe how you plan to evaluate the success of your subproject.***

**IPM-GROWN FOODS**

The number of farmers practicing high levels of IPM (> 80% of the crop's IPM Elements) will increase by 50% to approximately 45 growers.

Birds Eye Foods plans to evaluate changes in spray records submitted by their growers, assessing changes in numbers of sprays, pesticide usage, type of pesticide used, and usage patterns. Birds Eye Foods will be successful in supplying vegetable products to SYSCO under their Integrated Pest Management Sustainable Agriculture program.

**TRAC<sup>®</sup> SOFTWARE**

We will develop a survey of 2005 Trac<sup>®</sup> software users with the Survey Research Institute, Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University. The survey will be conducted over the phone and will be designed to last 5 to 10 minutes and assess important criteria such as the affect Trac record-keeping has had on their business, the most useful, and least useful features of the software.

**4. *Challenges/barriers being encountered, if any.***

**IPM-GROWN FOODS**

Challenges for Birds Eye Foods will include the collection and maintenance of the Sysco-required documentation in a single location or database; documentation of staff and supplier training / professional improvement. Another challenge may be any legal implications of the Sustainable Agriculture program and Birds Eye Foods potential liability if a supplier is found to be non-compliant due to differences in local ordinances, etc.

**TRAC<sup>®</sup> SOFTWARE**

Lack of farmers' computer literacy can hinder their ability to take advantage of Trac Software.

Promotion of Trac Software to growers in New York could be greatly improved. One grower was surprised that the software existed and that he had not heard about it through Farm Bureau or some other means. Are there better ways to reach growers about innovative tools that can enhance their farm businesses?

**5. *"Additional opportunities" on the horizon (e.g., new directions/ideas, grant opportunities that could build on AIC or use its support, etc.).***

Birdseye has proposed a wider ranging "Sustainable Agriculture" program with 7 areas of emphasis – one of which is IPM. Their staff has discussed this proposal with FVI staff, NYS Dept of Ag & Markets personnel, and dept of Ag personnel in several other states in which they operate. Birdseye proposes to develop lists similar to "IPM Elements" for the other 6 areas of their program. They will need considerable Cornell and CCE assistance to accomplish this ambitious program.